

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Thomas Marques , I am a Student from Bethel

I stand in support of S.B. 284: AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

I am natural from Brazil, and a community college student, under a student VISA status who have been living at Danbury area for almost 6 years. I came to this country to improve my language skills, learning English and Spanish. On my first year I had contact with a health care free clinic and used my skills to become an interpreter volunteer for the immigrant community. By the time, I developed a strong passion for the health care field and decided to pursue a nursing career. Right now, I'm on second semester of the nursing program at NVCC, with an expecting graduation as a RN in 2023.

Since I arrived in this country, I have been seeing how brutal the health care cost is, especially for people with marginalized income, as most of the immigrants, preventing their access to living right as health care. I have been seeing a huge number of immigrants, from all ages, unable to care about their life treatment illnesses as diabetes, cholesterol, hypertension, and others, including emergency situations, due the high cost and lack of insurance support. Specially during and after the pandemic, when most of the remaining workers who helped to keep this community functional and the economy alive, exposing themselves to the higher contagious virus, without a medical and financial support.

Health care is a living right! If the state requires the individual to possess an insurance to have medical care, this same state should be able to support this individual, who have been supporting the economy and the state development, to access an insurance. Specially for children, as they are the future of the nation and must grow healthy.

I support S.B. 284 and I ask the committee to support and pass this legislation. Looking forward, I ask the committee to work towards opening access to all immigrants regardless of age.

Thank you for your time,

Thomas Marques